

CITY OF SAN DIEGO, CALIFORNIA  
**COUNCIL POLICY**

CURRENT

SUBJECT: FINANCING STREET IMPROVEMENTS IN OLDER URBANIZED AREAS  
POLICY NO.: 200-03  
EFFECTIVE DATE: April 4, 1974

BACKGROUND:

1. General

There are approximately 53 miles of unimproved streets in use and a sizeable portion of this inventory provides access to property in the urbanized areas. In addition there are many more miles of street where existing improvements are not up to modern standards. These streets are in areas which were subdivided many years ago before street improvements were required in connection with subdivision development.

In the past the principle financing method used to provide needed improvements in older areas has been by Special Assessment proceedings. Though a large number of street improvements were constructed in this manner during the 1950's and 1960's, it has become more and more difficult to obtain petitions and consummate these assessment districts. In certain areas property owners desire to maintain the rural character of their neighborhoods. However, in the majority of cases, the greatest deterrent to the assessment district approach has been low property valuations and the problems created for owners with low incomes in paying off assessment bonds. There is, therefore, need for a City-wide program to assist in the improvement of substandard streets.

Though Council Policy 200-01 places basic responsibility for financing local streets with the abutting owners, it does indicate that partial City financing may be justified in older areas because of special public benefit. Examples of special benefits which would be derived from improvement of these local streets are reduction of maintenance costs and improved public relations.

2. Definitions

Unimproved Street - A street that has no surfacing or that has a minimum of surface treatment so that its thickness and quality are such as to be negligible.

Partially Improved Street - A street with an all-weather surfacing but which is not completely improved to the standards established for roads and streets in the urbanized area. Commonly, such streets do not have curbs or sidewalks and drainage facilities are inadequate. Also, right-of-way widths may be below normal requirements.

Fully Improved Street - A street improved with paving, curbs, sidewalks and necessary drainage facilities in accordance with the requirements outlined in Council Policy 600-04 and the City's current engineering standards.

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Older Urbanized Area - A previously subdivided area of the City where street dedications were accepted without a requirement that they be improved and where no resubdivision is necessary to create building sites compatible with the zoning existing on the property.

PURPOSE:

To establish a policy regarding City contributions to the improvement of unimproved and partially improved streets in the older urbanized areas of the City.

POLICY:

1. General

- a. In the older urbanized areas the City will contribute 50 percent of the total project cost of standard surface street improvements consisting of pavement, curb, sidewalk, grading and drainage facilities, when installation of such improvements is scheduled under the priority rating system outlined in this Policy. No contribution will be made toward the acquisition of right-of-way which may be needed to bring the street to a standard width. The City contribution may, however, include 50 percent of the cost of acquiring any drainage easement needed outside a standard street right-of-way width.
- b. Allocation of City funds in support of this policy will be determined annually and shown in the Capital Improvements Program.
- c. Improvements will ordinarily be installed by an assessment contract resulting from a property owner petition or an initiation by Council; but the work may also be performed under a permit arrangement or a City contract with cash payments from property owners for their share of the cost. Improvements being installed as a condition of the subdivision are not eligible for a City contribution under this policy.

2. Project Scheduling

- a. The scheduling of individual projects shall be based upon a priority rating system which considers the following factors:
  - (1) Valuation of property in a proposed assessment (or benefitting) district associated with project (as an indication of bonding capacity and income level of area.)
  - (2) Nature and extent of development served by the street (single family, multiple family, percentage of lots built upon, etc.).

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- (3) Percentage of adjacent streets which are fully improved.
  - (4) Community expressed need for the improvement (neighborhood organizations' attitudes or other evidence of the desires of area residents).
  - (5) History of the street (i.e., how long in service, nature of existing improvement, maintenance experience, and changes anticipated).
  - (6) Traffic volumes now and in the immediate future (both vehicular and pedestrian).
  - (7) Status of utilities located within the right-of-way (i.e., water, sewer, gas, electrical).
  - (8) Drainage problems associated with the street improvement.
  - (9) Availability of right-of-way for improvements contemplated.
  - (10) Other special public benefit, if any, which would result from the improvement.
  - \*(11) The primary consideration shall be owner-occupied residential areas.
- b. Prior to the end of each fiscal year, the City Manager shall submit to the Council for approval under this program a recommended list of projects for scheduling in the ensuing fiscal year. Projects recommended for scheduling shall consist only of those for which it is estimated a construction contract can be awarded during the next fiscal year. Further, a project will be considered for scheduling only when the total amount of money allocated to this contribution program in the six year period of the current Capital Improvements Program is sufficient to finance it and all other projects on the consolidated priority list which have a higher rating.

\*Revised by Council on 04/04/1974

**HISTORY:**

Adopted by Resolution R-169944 03/15/1962  
Amended by Resolution R-210320 04/04/1974